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AUTHOR	Duffy, Daniel
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ABSTRACT

Postsecondary Options (POS) or Dual Enrollment (DE) legislation has been enacted in 38 states to permit high school students to enroll simultaneously in high school and college courses. This study contributed to the policy discussion by exploring the parameters of policies on dual/concurrent enrollment in New Jersey and Ocean County College (a New Jersey community college) that relate to the admission of high school juniors and seniors to higher education. Data were gathered through a survey completed by 26 students and interviews with 4 administrators at the college. Quantitative data are organized into these areas: (1) student and academic support; (2) staff responsiveness; (3) quality teaching; (4) understanding of educational requirements; and (5) acceptance of high school students at the college. Qualitative data were collected about marketing of the programs, the decision to enroll, plans for use of credits, benefits of enrollment, perception of Ocean County College, and recommendations for improvement of the plan. Findings show many advantages to the dual enrollment plan, but also suggest that the future success of dual and concurrent enrollment at Ocean County College depends on the transition from the loosely coupled linkage at present to a more tightly coupled relationship between Ocean County high schools and Ocean County College. Three appendixes contain two data tables and the study survey. (Contains 2 tables and 24 references.) (SLD)

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Postsecondary enrollment opportunities for high school juniors and seniors:

A foundation for creating a seamless high school to college transition.

Abstract

Post-Secondary Options (PSO) or Dual Enrollment (DE) legislation has been enacted in thirty-eight states permitting high school students to enroll simultaneously in high school and college courses. This paper contributes to the policy discussion by exploring the parameters of both New Jersey's and Ocean County College's policies on dual/concurrent enrollment, which relate to the admittance of high school juniors and seniors to higher education. Quantitative data can be categorized within the following five areas: 1. Student and academic support, 2. Staff responsiveness, 3. Quality teaching, 4. Understanding of educational requirements, and 5. Acceptance of high school students at the college. Qualitative data conform to categories such as: marketing of the programs, decision to enroll, plans for use of credits, benefits of enrollment, perception of OCC, and recommendations for improvement.

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Vice President of Student Affairs
Ocean County College

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Table of Contents

	Page
Title	i
Table of Contents	ii
Introduction and Nature of the Problem	1
Definition of Terms	3
Review of the Literature	5
Nationwide Policy Initiatives on Dual/Concurrent Enrollment	5
State and College Policies Pertaining to Dual/Concurrent Enrollment	6
Methodology	11
Research Questions	12
Research Design	14
Site Description	14
Sampling	15
Data Collection Strategies and Instrumentation	15
Analysis	18
Results	19
Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion	29
Appendix A: Lickert Scale Results	36
Appendix B: Coding Categories and Frequency of Responses	37
Appendix C: Student Opinion and Satisfaction Survey	38
References	40

Introduction

The time has come for educators from schools and colleges to strengthen an educational community united in a common purpose and mission—to establish a seamless continuum of services and programs—focused on assisting students in the transition from high school to college. During these times of accountability and reform, secondary and post-secondary educators need to examine

> a number of factors that have combined to create an active audience for the debate on how well our "system" of secondary and post-secondary education works. These factors include increasing college tuition costs, public skepticism about the value of increased secondary school spending, debate over the purpose of college and the meaning of cultural literacy, and a teacher shortage. A series of reports included *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983), which heightened the public perception of a crisis in our schools. (Greenberg, 1991, p. 25)

The past few decades have witnessed a trend whereby high school students complete graduation requirements upon the conclusion of their junior year. This scenario results in many of the most capable students biding time during their senior year by enrolling in non-essential electives rather than rigorous academic courses. This circumstance is of importance to parents, high school and college officials, because these students are not being challenged academically or further developed in preparation for their educational advancement. In response, many states have enacted policies that permit high schools and colleges to collaborate in the establishment of educational alternatives to mitigate this problem. One of these educational alternatives is described as dual credit, dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment. All of these terms relate to the same initiative, which permits high school juniors and seniors to earn college credit, while still attending high school. According to Boswell (2001), "hundreds of thousands of secondary students across the nation—as many as 10 percent of high school students in some states—are participating in various forms of postsecondary enrollment options" (p. 7). This opportunity is

often targeted to advanced placement students who have proven their ability to succeed academically. Additional approaches for the implementation of dual/concurrent enrollment are targeted to the following types of students: students of color, economically disadvantaged students, and students who may excel in subjects such as fine arts, graphic design or computer technology. Following are a variety of outcomes that are realized in targeting special student populations. Hugo (2001) found in her research that dual/concurrent enrollment provides "an opportunity for minority and first-generation students to learn about colleges and improve their study skills, and it gives them more information about the process of attending college" (p. 72). Other benefits for these targeted groups include an opportunity to experience college level courses within subject areas that are not available at the high school.

Variations within this dual enrollment approach allow a student to consult with their high school guidance counselor regarding the ability to register at a community college or four-year college as either a full-time or part-time student. Based on a student's interests and abilities, it is possible for a student to choose to attend college full-time in lieu of their senior year in high school. For those students who select this option, their guidance counselor or principal may determine specific college liberal arts courses, which must be taken in order to satisfy high school graduation requirements. If a student has already qualified for high school graduation, then liberal arts course recommendations are made with the intent of enabling the student to "get a jump start" on their college career. Credits achieved in this manner may be applied toward a student's degree at the college that awards credit or transferred to a college of their choice. For those qualified students who desire to attend college on a part-time basis, they would schedule a meeting with their high school guidance counselor to discuss and select appropriate courses that they would like to enroll in for a specific semester. Benefits associated with the implementation

of dual enrollment policies for full- and part-time students help them to "progress faster through their college education, saving the state and themselves money, while freeing up opportunities for other students" (Boswell, 2000, p. 11).

The purpose of this policy paper is to investigate state and college policies, which govern the admittance of high school juniors and seniors to postsecondary education. Specific emphasis will focus on the goals, objectives and benefits of dual/concurrent enrollment programs from a state, community college, high school, and student/parent perspective. In addition, practices will be examined to identify effective recruitment methods and transitional assistance services, which strengthen dual/concurrent enrollment programs. This study will specifically explore Ocean County College's dual/concurrent enrollment program and will create a college-wide process for the assessment and analysis of program strengths and areas of improvement.

The remainder of the paper is organized into the following sections: definition of terms; a summary of the literature on dual/concurrent enrollment; a description of methodology utilized in the study; analysis; results; discussion, recommendations, and conclusion.

Definition of Terms

It is important to operationally define terminology associated with dual/concurrent enrollment. Through this process, terminology can be clarified which establishes a strong foundation for effective communication and understanding among all constituents. Additional benefits to be realized from the defining of terms include: identification of key elements which comprise each term, distinguishing features between and among terms, and establishment of research-oriented definitions. For the purpose of this policy research study, the following terms are defined:

Academic outreach. "Academic outreach programs can be divided into two general types. The first type of institutional academic outreach encourages at-risk students to plan for college with

no focus on a particular discipline. The second type focuses on recruiting and preparing at-risk students for matriculation into specific academic disciplines offered by an institution" (Fenske, R.H., Geranios, C.A., Keller, J.E., & Moore, D.E., 1997, p. 9).

Academic support services. (Robertson, P.F., Chapman, B.G., & Gaskin, F., 2001) define academic support services as "academic advising, precollege counseling, financial aid planning, study skills workshops, and assessment testing" (p. 3).

Application for high school students. A specific college admissions application that is printed by Ocean County College and distributed to the guidance departments within the county high schools.

College high programs. This term refers to "agreements between high schools and colleges to offer college-level courses at the high school" (Robertson, P.F., Chapman, B.G., & Gaskin, F., 2001, p. 8).

Dual credit, dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment. These three terms are interchangeable and refer to the practice of permitting students "to enroll in college-level courses prior to their graduation from high school" (Greenberg, 1991, p. 25).

Early admission program. A college admissions program, which permits high school students to enroll prior to high school graduation.

Early intervention. Early intervention is defined (Fenske, R.H., Geranios, C.A., Keller, J.E., & Moore, D.E., 1997) as "programs for school children that affect their persistence to high school graduation, and enrollment in postsecondary education" (p. 7).

Educational acceleration. The practice of providing high school students with postsecondary enrollment options which allow them to complete their college education in an accelerated time period.

High school-college partnerships. These partnerships are created through formal agreements between high schools and colleges, which encourage collaboration, innovation and responsiveness, in the creation of programs and services which address the needs of students.

Jump start program. This program is a dual/concurrent enrollment program at Ocean County College, which permits a high school junior or senior to enroll in college courses as a part-time student.

Trustee scholarship. This term refers to a discounted tuition rate of $28.00 per credit plus appropriate fees for high school juniors and seniors who enroll within college courses at Ocean County College.

Review of the Literature

Nationwide Policy Initiatives on Dual/Concurrent Enrollment

Since the early 1950's, state and college policymakers have collaborated in providing both the educational framework and organizational structure supportive of educational acceleration. These "first college admissions programs were created by the College Board..." (Boswell, 2001, p. 8). Additionally, advanced placement (AP) courses were developed "to permit secondary students to take college-level courses while still in high school. Upon achieving a passing score on a national exam, students receive advanced standing when accepted at a college or university" (p. 8).

As of the spring of 2001, legislation has been enacted in thirty-eight states permitting "students to enroll simultaneously in high school and college courses. Known as dual enrollment, the law varies in its details from state to state, but all versions contain similar core elements" (McCarthy, 1999, p. 2). This legislation is entitled "Post-Secondary Options (PSO) or Dual Enrollment (DE) legislation" (p.2). As a result of the formulation of these policies, students may

> enroll in college courses that are held on the college campus or occasionally take place within the high school. The Education Commission of the States (1998) identified 12 states (Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, [emphasis added] Ohio, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin) that have comprehensive programs: Students pay little or no tuition, earn both high school and college credit, and encounter few course restrictions. (McCarthy, 1999, p. 2).

Although the details of each state's legislation is different, the following four themes emerge as a common thread among legislative actions:

1. Student eligibility. Most states authorize dual enrollment for both 11th and 12th grade students who have no comparable course available in their high school....

2. Academic credit for college course. All states agree that dual-enrolled students can earn high school credit when they complete a college course... Ten states (Kansas,

> Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, [emphasis added] North Dakota, Ohio, Utah, and Washington) stipulate that the student can earn both high school and credit immediately upon completion of the course....
>
> 3. Control of decision to dual enroll. The law guarantees eligible high school students the right to enroll in college courses. A few states have inserted language that makes eligibility contingent on school district approval, but in most cases, the final authority rests with the student....
>
> 4. College tuition payment. States' laws vary, but all stipulate that college tuition fees shall be paid either by families or by state tax dollars allocated for K-12 education. When the legislative language permits, but does not require, districts to cover the costs of tuition, most districts choose not to pay the tuition (McCarthy, 1999, p. 2-3).

All of the above elements, described by McCarthy, particularly the introduction of discount tuition (OCC Trustee Scholarship) and expansion of student eligibility, have focused renewed interest in dual/concurrent enrollment within the Ocean County, New Jersey educational community.

State and College Policies Pertaining to Dual/Concurrent Enrollment

Research conducted by Boswell (2001), on state policy and post-secondary enrollment options, has identified two dominant approaches for offering dual/concurrent enrollment.

> College high programs represent agreements between high schools and colleges to offer college-level courses at the high school, typically for both secondary and post-secondary credit. The curriculum content and standards are determined by the appropriate college academic department, and the courses are usually taught by high school faculty members who hold the same academic credentials required of those teaching at the college....
>
> Concurrent enrollment programs typically enable high school students to register for college courses taught by college faculty members on the college campus, where they receive both high school and college credit for their coursework. (p. 8)

The above two approaches for offering dual/concurrent enrollment are contained within both New Jersey's legislation and Ocean County College's policy governing the admission of high school students to college. As far as state policy is concerned, New Jersey's legislation (P.L. 18A:61) entitled: College-level instruction for high school students established

> a program to promote increased cooperation between the State's high schools and institutions of higher education. The objective of this program shall be to increase the access of our State's able high school student to the educational resources available in our institutions of higher education. This program shall supplement the efforts of local school districts to provide appropriate education to their students and shall not relieve a district of any obligation established by statute or regulation." (P.L. 18A:61)

At the college policy level, OCC's policy (#5122) entitled: Student Admission-General Requirements stipulates the following minimum requirements for admission of full-time and part-time high school students:

> 3.a. Full-time students: Fulfill college requirements for admission; submit written recommendations from the high school counselor and the high school principal; and have achieved above the 90th percentile within the high school class.
>
> 4.a. Part-time students: Satisfy any course prerequisite; submit written recommendation from the high school principal or guidance counselor for the particular course desired; and have earned an overall average of "C" or better in high school or demonstrated a high potential to succeed in special areas related to college courses desired. (OCC Policy #5122)

With an understanding of the parameters of both New Jersey's and Ocean County College's policies on dual/concurrent enrollment summarized, it is now worthwhile to explore the goals, objectives, and benefits which have been identified within several exemplary programs. These exemplary programs will be highlighted through further review of the literature from a statewide, college, high school, and student/parent perspective. From the state viewpoint, motivational factors supportive of dual/concurrent enrollment incorporate goals such as:

- *Providing challenging educational opportunities for high school students,
- *Improving the college preparation of all students, thus reducing the need for remediation at the postsecondary level,
- *Increasing the number of citizens who participate in some form of postsecondary education in order to ensure a trained, competitive workforce,
- *Accelerating the educational progress of students through postsecondary education, saving both students and taxpayers significant dollars, and
- *Fostering collaboration between high schools and colleges, resulting in reduced redundancy and ensuring a more seamless K-16 public education system. (Boswell, 2001, pp. 13-14)

The above goals reinforce the important role that state legislation provides in establishing initiatives within the education and higher education communities. Several social forces impact state policy dealing with the creation of dual/concurrent legislation. These forces include an emphasis on accountability within secondary and higher education, extending educational opportunities, promoting access and equity within higher education and improving cost effectiveness.

With the foundation established by statewide legislation, the opportunity for improving relationships and creating comprehensive dual/concurrent enrollment programs between high schools and colleges was possible. Principal goals and objectives articulated by secondary and higher education professionals are to:

> (1) provide a wide variety of college-level courses for students, (2) provide student development-oriented, first-year experience courses to high school students, (3) enhance the performing and visual arts curricula in high schools, (4) enhance science and language offerings in high schools, (5) expose as many students as possible to a college-level experience, (6) provide a college-level experience for the most academically talented students, (7) allow students to "get a jump" on their college education, (8) provide a seamless transition from high school to college, and (9) encourage students who do not aspire to attending college to explore the possibility of continuing their education. (Chapman, 2001, p. 16)

The above goals are specifically important to Ocean County College because they are in alignment with three of the four themes found within the college's strategic initiatives. The three themes, which relate to dual/concurrent enrollment, are outreach, energizing, and renewal. The outreach component references the building of community and partnerships. Within the energizing component is a reference to encouraging innovation in programs and services. And, the renewal component cites the need to encourage communication and collaboration (OCC Strategic Initiatives, 2001). Benefits to be derived by Ocean County College, from dual/concurrent enrollment programs, relate to increased student recruitment, stronger high

school and college personnel partnerships, alliance and coalition building opportunities with high school students and their parents, and the means to expand access to higher education for students of color and those who are economically disadvantaged.

Previously, goals and objectives were identified from a secondary and higher education frame of reference. These goals and objectives highlight the continuum of educational opportunities, which are available to high school students, should they qualify for and be interested in enrollment in college courses. As a result of these goals, there are additional benefits, to the high school, its faculty and administration. Certainly, the strengthening of high school and college personnel partnerships are one of the paramount benefits of these programs. Additionally, high school faculty can take advantage of opportunities, which directly enhance their position. One of the ways in which high school faculty can enhance their position is by becoming affiliated with the college as a part-time adjunct faculty member. As such, high school faculty could teach college courses either on-site at the high school or at the college. Benefits of this adjunct faculty status include: additional income, affiliation at the collegial level with counterparts from their academic discipline, and enhanced levels of career satisfaction and fulfillment (Greenberg, 1991).

Meaningful benefits to the high school are that in addition to their high school education, students have obtained credits, which can amount to more than a semester's worth of college. As a result, these students realize that they are indeed prepared for college. This early admissions experience has also pleased their parents, as the high school is perceived as providing a valuable learning opportunity at a significant value. (Helfgot, 2001). Additional benefits, which amass to the high school, constitute the fact that they benefit from a more comprehensive curriculum, which offers high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to enroll in an array of specialized,

or upper-level courses, which are unavailable within the high school. These opportunities stimulate and engage students thereby creating the perception that the high school is an environment that boosts student performance, as well as graduation and college transfer rates (Chapman, 2001).

The ultimate goals of dual/concurrent enrollment programs are to engage, recruit, and retain qualified high school students in college courses. But, simply creating a dual/concurrent enrollment program is not sufficient to ensure that appropriate high school students and their parents are properly informed of the benefits of participation in the program. With this in mind, a comprehensive approach to marketing and recruitment is required by the college to assure success. Fundamental to this undertaking is a need to clearly establish program benefits for students and their parents. From a student perspective, there are several key benefits. One of the main benefits is that students who enroll in dual/concurrent programs earn college credits while they are still in high school. This process allows a student to accelerate their collegiate educational program upon transfer to the two- or four-year institution. Further benefits are the possibility of reducing tuition costs and providing the option of enrolling within additional electives or specialized courses earlier in their college career (Greenberg, 1991). From a parental perspective, there are several advantages to enrolling their child in dual/concurrent enrollment courses. First, they save money due to a discounted tuition rate. This investment in their child's education accumulates, as high school students can obtain credits for one or more courses taken during the fall, spring and summer semesters of their junior and senior year. This experience also assists parents in the clarification of their child's ability and motivation level to successfully complete requirements of college-level courses (Greenberg).

Therefore, from a parental viewpoint, there is widespread support for "dual enrollment because they see that it results in increased student achievement" (McCarthy, 1999, p. 8).

In summary, the review of literature has documented the innovative practice of postsecondary enrollment opportunities, which address the needs of high school students. As portrayed within this literature review, the research literature provides evidence of the benefits of addressing these needs through high school-college partnerships, which provide high school students with an opportunity to accelerate their college education. In contrast however, is the lack of absolute and conclusive findings within the literature on the specific services and programs, which provide students with a seamless high school to college transition. If high schools and colleges are to succeed in the accomplishment of their missions, it is imperative that additional research be conducted to discover significant components of the transitional process facing students as they transition from high school to college. These findings will focus on the necessary support services that strengthen a seamless transition from high school to college. This policy research paper will contribute to the understanding of the programs and services, which are necessary to engage, recruit and retain qualified high school students in college courses.

Methodology

With a substantial body of research attesting to the value and effectiveness of postsecondary enrollment opportunities for high school students, it is difficult to comprehend why OCC's Early Admission and Jump Start programs have not previously been analyzed. The Early Admission program provides an opportunity for exceptional students to attend college, full-time in lieu of their high school senior year. The Jump Start program provides the chance for above average students to enroll in a college course, part-time during their high school junior

or senior year. Although both of these programs have been operational for over twenty years, an analysis of program effectiveness and student satisfaction have not been systematically conducted to isolate variables and identify opportunities for improvement. This study is designed to initiate the process of institutionalizing a formal assessment, analysis, and continuous improvement strategy for addressing the needs of dual/concurrent enrollment high school students.

Research Questions

The purpose of this policy paper is to investigate state and college policies, which govern the admittance of high school juniors and seniors to higher education. Specific emphasis will focus on the goals, objectives and benefits of dual/concurrent enrollment programs from a state, community college, high school, and student/parent perspective. Additionally, this study will explore Ocean County College's dual/concurrent enrollment program and will create a college-wide process for the assessment and analysis of program strengths and areas of improvement. With this in mind, the following statement, observation and question format has been taken, in the identification of research questions. This design has been described by Mills (2000) as a process to conduct action research. This researcher would like to adopt this approach because it includes "a statement which links an idea to action and refers to a state of affairs or situation one wishes to change or improve on" (p.26).

Statement/Observation #1: Since the late 1980's, there have been over thirty-five states which have instituted postsecondary enrollment options legislation. This legislation permits academically qualified high school students to enroll in college courses while still in high school.

Question #1: What are the parameters of both New Jersey's and Ocean County College's policies on dual/concurrent enrollment, which relate to the admittance of high school juniors and seniors to higher education?

Statement/Observation #2: Robertson's (2001) research has identified a variety of marketing strategies that colleges have implemented to inform high school administrators, teachers, students and their parents of postsecondary enrollment opportunities (pp. 19-20).

Question #2: How has Ocean County College's "Jump Start" program been marketed to high school administrators, guidance staff, potential students and their parents?

Statement/Observation #3: Greenberg (1991), Clayton (1999), and McCarthy (1999) have each identified benefits associated with dual/concurrent enrollment programs. But, the identification of benefits alone will not provide college administrators with the necessary feedback from participants on their degree of student satisfaction with the program.

Question #3: What is the degree of student satisfaction among those high school students who are currently enrolled at Ocean County College?

Statement/Observation #4: Palmer (2000) and Robertson (2001) have both investigated transitional and academic support services, which strengthen a student's ability to succeed in college. These support services provide a solid foundation for both high school and college students to strengthen their ability to succeed in college.

Question #4: What types of high school to college transitional assistance strengthen effective dual/concurrent enrollment programs, thereby creating a seamless high school to college transition?

Research Design

The approach taken with this study is not policy analysis, which would examine Ocean County College's existing dual/concurrent policy and the policy creation and amendment process. Instead, this study is policy research oriented because it is designed to provide policymakers with information, options and recommendations that they need to address issues that relate to dual/concurrent enrollment at Ocean County College. The research design utilizes a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative techniques for data gathering (Majchrzak, 1984). This design was selected in order to triangulate data from both a quantitative emphasis on numbers and measurements, as well as a qualitative focus on verbal narratives and observations. According to Bogdan and Bilken, qualitative research strategies are "rich in description of people, places, and conversations, and not easily handled by statistical procedures" (1998, p. 2). From Majchrzak's (1984) perspective, there are several qualitative methods for primary data gathering. These include in-depth interviews and semi-structured interviews with specific individuals. Additionally, "participant observation, which involves the investigator serving both as a participant and observer in gathering information on an ongoing process…can provide valuable insight into causal factors and preliminary findings" (p. 62).

Site Description

Ocean County College is one of nineteen community colleges within the state of New Jersey. It is a comprehensive community college serving Ocean County on the east coast of New Jersey. It was established in 1964 as the first county college in the state. The college mission describes that "faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members work together as partners to advance and promote the college as the leading cultural, social, and educational center of the county" (Ocean County College Strategic Initiatives, 2001). There are

approximately 7,500 full- and part-time students enrolled at the college within the main campus in Toms River, Southern Education Center (SEC) in Manahawkin, and thirteen high schoo! evening extension sites in the county. Qualified high school students may participate in either the Early Admission or Jump St ırt dual/concurrent enrollment programs at Ocean County College. Of the 231 students who are currently enrolled in these programs, all but fifteen of these students are enrolled in a course on campus. The fifteen students represent the first group of high school students who have participated in a course that was scheduled specifically for them at the Southern Education Center. Throughout the spring 2002 semester, college representatives have been visiting high school personnel to coordinate the scheduling of additional courses to be offered on-site at several area high schools for the fall 2002 semester.

Sampling

The demographics of eligible high school junior and senior clientele capable of being served by these programs include approximately 10,000 students from fifteen high schools in Ocean County. Of these eligible high school juniors and seniors, 231 are enrolled at Ocean County College in the spring 2002 semester. These students have been admitted to either the Early Admission Program or Jump Start Program based on the criteria, which has been established at the college. The total population of 231 subjects enrolled at Ocean County College served as the sample population for this study.

Data Collection Strategies and Instrumentation

Qualitative data gathering techniques utilized for the policy research study include: participant observation, collection of organizational artifacts, and structured and unstructured student and staff interviews. A student opinion and satisfaction survey (Appendix C) was administered, via mail, to the total population of 231 high school juniors and seniors enrolled at

OCC during the spring 2002 semester. A mixed methodological approach deployed for data collection was a student opinion survey, which obtained twenty-six responses to both open-ended questions (qualitative) and statements of degree of satisfaction (quantitative) with the college. The twenty-six responses essentially represented a convenience sampling as fifteen responses were received via mail response and an additional eleven responses were obtained as a result of the researcher visiting a Western Civilization II course at the college's Southern Education Center in Manahawkin, New Jersey. The course held at the Southern Education Center has enrolled fifteen high school seniors because it was specifically scheduled in response to a need identified within Southern Regional High School.

To address research question #1, which deals with understanding the parameters of both New Jersey's and Ocean County College's policies on dual/concurrent enrollment, the data collection strategy deployed involved the following: a review of the literature, identification of organizational artifacts (policies), and structured and semi-structured interviews with college administrative staff. The structured interviews contained three open-ended questions that were asked of two Ocean County College administrators, the Director of Admissions and the Associate Director of Admissions. These college representatives were selected because of their years of experience in the Admissions Office, working with county high school guidance directors and staff. The questions asked of these individuals are as follows: 1. What policy governs the admission of high school juniors and seniors to the college? 2. What are the eligibility criteria for the admission of high school juniors and seniors to the college?, and, 3. Explain the process that the college follows in admitting high school juniors and seniors to the college?

Research question #2, pertained to how Ocean County College's "Jump Start" program has been marketed to the high school community. The data collection strategy utilized to obtain feedback from high school students on marketing of the program was contained in the student opinion survey. Survey respondents provided their answers to an open-ended question that asked them how they learned about OCC's programs. Secondary education sector interviews were conducted with two Directors of Guidance from high school districts in Ocean County. The primary data collection strategy that was used for obtaining feedback from high school guidance administrators was an open-ended question asking them to comment on their perception of how the programs have been marketed.

Research question #3, which comprised an assessment of the degree of student satisfaction among program participants, was measured within the student opinion survey through a Lickert style questionnaire, comprised of five items, with the following choices available for response: 1: Strongly Agree, 2: Agree, 3: Neutral, 4: Disagree, and 5: Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire asked students to respond to five statements about their degree of satisfaction with: student and academic support services, staff member responsiveness, quality of teaching, requirements for educational programs and their acceptance as a college student.

Research question #4 asked respondents to comment on the types of high school to college transitional assistance that they would recommend in order to strengthen the program. Survey respondents provided feedback to open-ended statements which asked for their suggestions regarding: the admissions process, student orientation to the college, student services and academic support, plans for enrolling in college after high school graduation, and plans for applying for financial aid for college. An additional method of data gathering for question #4 included three open-ended interview questions that were asked of two OCC administrators and

two Ocean County high school Guidance Directors who participated in planning and implementation of dual/concurrent enrollment courses. These questions were: 1. In thinking about _____, what do you believe are the strengths of this segment of the program? 2. In thinking about _____, what do you believe are the weaknesses of this segment of the program? 3. In thinking about _____, what recommendations for improvement would you suggest for the program? NOTE: The following topical areas were addressed within the format of the above questions: the admissions process, student orientation to the college, student services and academic support, plans for enrolling at college after high school graduation, and plans for applying for financial aid for college after high school graduation.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to examine quantitative data obtained from the Lickert style statements found within the student opinion and satisfaction survey. A master list was created using a blank copy of the questionnaire. Individual responses were recorded on this master list using simple tally marks in groupings of five, when warranted. After all responses were recorded on the master list, totals were tabulated for each of the nominal scale responses. The total number of responses was written above the nominal scale for each of the five items within the survey. These scores were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet and two columns were created to summarize the data into mean and mode scores for each of the five items within the survey. Using Excel, the table of survey results, which appears within Appendix A, was created and imported into Word. Interviews and responses from the open-ended qualitative data assessment were transcribed and coded to major themes. Coding categories conform to the parameters of the questions and statements contained within the written survey, structured and

semi-structured interviews. Additional data was compiled through the tabulation of Lickert scale questionnaire responses received from twenty-six high school juniors and seniors who were enrolled during the Spring 2002 semester.

Results

The table entitled "Early admission and jump start program student opinion and satisfaction survey Lickert scale results," (see Appendix A), depicts an analysis of responses contained within the Lickert style segment of the student opinion survey. This quantitative data has been categorized within the following five areas: 1. Student and academic support, 2. Staff responsiveness, 3. Quality teaching, 4. Understanding of educational requirements, and 5. Acceptance of high school students at the college. Caution must be taken when interpreting the results of the student opinion and satisfaction survey, due to the sample population size of twenty-six subjects. Because of this limited sampling, a visual analysis of the mean scores indicate, that for three of the categories, they are relatively the same. The researcher believes that the mean score for quality teaching and college acceptance may have been affected due to the eleven responses from the students taking a Western Civilization II course at the Southern Education Center. The students participating in this course are all advanced placement students at Southern Regional High School and their responses may have impacted the mean score for quality teaching. In addition, it was recently learned that four non-high school students who were also enrolled in the Western Civilization II course withdrew over the course of the semester. The fact that these college students withdrew from a course that was comprised mainly of high school students may have impacted the perception that these high school students have of acceptance within the college. With the above in mind, interpretation of the responses within the Lickert style items, are as follows:

Student/academic support. Success oriented student/academic support services offered by Ocean County College range from: academic advising, study skills workshops, tutoring, math and writing laboratories, and library resources. Academic advising is provided to Early Admission and Jump Start students through the registration process each semester. Study skills workshops are scheduled throughout each semester and are provided by Advising, Career, Counseling and Transfer Services (ACCT) Center. Information on these study skills programs are contained within an ACCT Newsletter which is published twice each semester. Tutoring services at Ocean County College are coordinated at the academic department level. Academic departments also coordinate the math and writing skills laboratories. To access supplemental math and writing skills resources, students can either be referred by an instructor, or they can make a request for assistance at the Math or English Department. Student responses to the statement, "I have an understanding of the student and academic support services available to me (Academic Advising, Study Skills Workshops, Tutoring, Math/Writing Lab, Library)" were clustered around the neutral category. Fully 50% of the respondents indicated a neutral response to this statement. This finding may underscore the fact that high school students do not adequately understand these student and academic support services or are unaware of the procedure for accessing these services.

Staff responsiveness. Ocean County College is in the midst of an organizational culture change that embraces a "student-centered learning environment." Of critical importance to administrators is staff responsiveness to student inquiries and requests for assistance. Responses to the statement, "Staff members are responsive to my individual concerns" were clustered within the strongly agree and agree categories. These positive responses represent 69% of the total responses to this statement.

Quality teaching. Community colleges pride themselves on the fact that faculty are 100% focused on teaching. Tenure and promotion status at the community college is not predicated on the amount of time that faculty invest in academic research and publication. Because of this community college focus, responses to the statement, "Quality teaching is important to faculty" provide an important indicator of educational success. Student responses to this statement were clustered within the strongly agree and agree categories. These responses represent 77% of the total responses to this statement.

Educational requirements. High school students who decide to enroll at Ocean County College in either the Early Admission or Jump Start programs want to obtain college credit that may be utilized within an academic program at OCC or elsewhere (Appendix B). As a result, it is extremely important that dual/concurrent enrollment students understand how the course or courses they are taking relate to educational requirements for transfer or graduation purposes. With this in mind, responses to the statement, "I have an understanding of the requirements for educational programs that interest me" were clustered within the strongly agree and agree categories. These positive responses represent 73% of the total responses to this statement.

College acceptance. According to a classic analysis of retention within higher education, conducted by Vincent Tinto, retention of students could be improved by enhancing a student's integration into the academic and social systems within the institution. This theory implies that a student will be more likely to persist in college in direct relation to his/her ability to become acclimated and integrated within these institutional systems (1975). Certainly, student feelings of acceptance as a college student would be supported by Tinto's theory. With the above in mind, responses to the statement, "I feel that I have been accepted

as a college student by students, faculty and staff" are clustered within the strongly agree and agree categories. These positive responses represent 61% of the total responses to this statement.

The above results demonstrate a high degree of student satisfaction within all but the student and academic support area. This information highlights that additional methods should be explored to communicate student and academic support services to high school students.

The table entitled "Coding categories and frequency of responses for a study of early admission and jump start students at Ocean County College," (see Appendix B), depicts an analysis of the responses contained within the open-ended question qualitative data aspect of the student opinion and satisfaction survey. These categories include: marketing of the programs, decision to enroll, plans for use of credits, benefits of enrollment, perception of OCC, and recommendations for improvement. In analyzing these results, four themes emerge which characterize these high school respondents. These themes include: 1. decision and benefits to enroll, 2. plans for the use of credits, 3. perception of Ocean County College, and 4. recommendations for program improvement. These four themes comprise a variety of responses from high school juniors and seniors and will be described below:

Decision and benefits to enroll. According to Greenberg's research, one of the main benefits of dual/concurrent enrollment is that students can earn college credits while they are still in high school. This process allows a student to accelerate their college education upon transferring to a two- or four-year institution (1991). 73% of the students indicated that the main reason for participating in the dual/concurrent enrollment program was to "get a feel for the college experience" and to "get a jump on college credits." Additional responses to this question related to the completion of college pre-requisites. With this intent in mind, several students indicated

that they enrolled in Jump Start courses because they "wanted to take care of prerequisites early" and "start working toward their course requirements to enter the Nursing Program." Other responses to this question were focused on several students desire to "take advantage of a new opportunity" and "be challenged by college level work."

Plans for the use of credits. 73% of the respondents indicated that they intended to transfer college credits earned through dual/concurrent enrollment to a diverse number of four year colleges and universities such as: Boston University, Drexel, Monmouth University, Rider University, Rutgers University, Saint Joseph's University, Stevens Institute of Technology, Stockton State College, The State University of New York, University of Rhode Island, and others. 23% of respondents intended to apply their credits earned toward an associate degree at Ocean County College. Because all but one of the high school students taking courses planned to apply credits toward an associate or baccalaureate degree it is important that high school participants understand the importance of registering for appropriate courses which are universally transferable. The significance of this issue was highlighted in an article on two-year colleges in USA Today, ("High marks," 2000). This article reinforced that transferability of credits to a four-year college or university is a significant concern to students who enroll at community colleges. As a result, it is important for all students to become knowledgeable of the merits of enrolling in strong transfer-oriented liberal arts courses such as: English I and II, Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology, Western Civilization I and II and Public Speaking. The admissions process created for the Early Admissions and Jump Start programs require that the high school guidance counselor or guidance director specify the course or courses to be taken on the application that a student submits each semester in order to enroll. This application also contains an area where the student's parent or guardian must sign prior to registration. This

process is further strengthened through a meeting with an Ocean County College Academic Advisor during registration. The desired outcomes of the above procedures are strengthened communications between all parties concerned and an assurance that college credits earned will be transferable.

Perception of Ocean County College. According to Hossler, et al., parents of high school students play an important role in the shaping of educational plans for their children (1999). Ocean County College administrators are acutely aware of the important role that parents play in high school students' educational decision-making process. As a result, one of the reasons why the Early Admission and Jump Start programs were amended to permit high school seniors and juniors [emphasis added] to enroll at a reduced Trustee Scholarship cost [emphasis added], was to provide opportunities to dispel misperceptions of the community college experience. During the spring 2002 semester, the college has witnessed unprecedented interest in the Early Admission and Jump Start programs from high school faculty, administrators, students and their parents. One example of this interest was demonstrated at the college's annual Open House program in April, where there were approximately 100 high school sophomores and their parents in an audience of approximately 500 high school students and their parents. In anticipation of a response from sophomores and their parents, a targeted Early Admission and Jump Start program workshop was scheduled immediately following the opening program. The discussion that ensued during the workshop contained many thoughtful questions from parents and potential students. The Vice-President of Student Affairs and the Associate Director of Admissions and Records provided an overview of both dual/concurrent enrollment programs and responded to questions. It is this researchers opinion that informational workshop programs such as the above can strengthen the educational credibility of community colleges in the minds of high school

students and their parents. A high school student currently enrolled at Ocean County College was not part of the workshop but will be added to the 2003 program to ensure that a high school student voice and perspective will be articulated in the future. Another significant method of influencing high school students' perceptions of the community college is to encourage them to participate in the educational experience firsthand. College administrators believe that this approach is the most direct way to provide high school students with a realistic assessment of the quality of education at a community college. Many high school students have the misconception that because a community college is founded on the principle of open-admission, that anyone can succeed in individual courses and complete graduation requirements. This perception simply isn't accurate and upon enrollment in college courses, high school students soon realize that there are indeed high expectations and standards of performance for every course. Certainly, misperceptions such as the above can be corrected as a result of high school students' communication with their parents and friends back at high school regarding their college experience. Specific responses received from high school students on their perception of Ocean County College were the result of the following question: As a result of taking courses at the institution, what are your comments about OCC? The responses to this open-ended question were extremely positive and included statements such as: "I love the professors I've had and the campus. The people are very friendly and helpful." Other quotes were "OCC changed the way I thought a two-year college would be like" and "This is a fine institution with excellent teachers." Additional comments were: "I really enjoyed the professors and the campus. Even though I am younger than most, I still feel that I belong at OCC." College administrators and faculty can only hope that comments such as the above are being shared with families and friends of these high school students who are currently enrolled at OCC. One result of this kind of

communication is that preconceived negative perceptions of the merits of a community college education can be dispelled.

Recommendations for program improvement. With the idea of continuous improvement in mind, it is important for college administrators to obtain feedback from program participants to determine both program strengths and areas for improvement. This information was acquired through responses to the following statement: What suggestions would you provide OCC in order to improve the following aspects of the Early Admissions and Jump Start programs: 1.The admissions process, 2. Student orientation to the college, 3. Student services and academic support, 4. Plans for enrolling at college after high school, and 5. Plans for applying for financial aid after high school graduation. A summary of responses, are as follows:

1. Admissions: These recommendations include "having OCC representatives make presentations to high school students at their high school" and "improved communication between OCC and high school guidance offices." Additional comments were to "make high school students more aware of the programs at an earlier age" and to "let high school students register a day earlier than other students."
2. Student orientation: The majority of recommendations within this area dealt with the fact that most students did not receive any information on student orientation. These responses are accurate, as the college has not had a formal student orientation program scheduled for high school students in the past. Specific suggestions were "to have a separate orientation for high school students" and "to make student orientation more accessible to students at the Southern Education Center." Additional comments were to "do a more effective job of informing students of the program" and to "provide high school students with a college student handbook."

3. Student/academic support: According to (Boylan, Bonham & White), almost every college provides some sort of service for students who are not quite ready to take a particular course, pass a particular test, or enroll in a particular major. Services in support of these student needs vary from informal tutoring activities to highly structured and comprehensive programs such as: assessment, academic advising, individualized instruction, and tutoring (1999). Recommendations received from high school students for improvement of these student and academic support services were to "make services more easily accessible" and "to schedule services around high school student schedules and activities." Additional comments were to "expand the inventory of the SEC Bookstore" and to "distribute a listing of email contact names and addresses for these services."
4. Plans for enrolling at college: Recruitment of graduating high school students, as full-time OCC students, represents a key marketing strategy for college staff members. Even though 73% of high school students currently enrolled at OCC plan to transfer their credits to a four-year institution (see Appendix B), college representatives can begin to target mailings on admission to OCC to these 231 high school students. This population of high school students could also be utilized to serve as Student Ambassadors who share information on OCC with their high school counterparts. Recommendations for improvement within this category dealt with "distributing OCC view books and applications to Jump Start students" and "providing one-on-one advising sessions for high school students." Additional comments were to "schedule meetings to discuss how credits will transfer" and "having OCC representatives explain the process to apply."

5. Plans for financial aid: According to Hossler, et al., by the time students have reached their junior year, they and their parents are knowledgeable about college costs and student financial aid (1999). The Ocean County College Financial Aid Office has contributed to this knowledge through the offering of 12 financial aid workshops, presented on-site at county high schools, to parents of high school juniors and seniors, during December 2001 and January 2002. This outreach effort is a key component of Ocean County College's recruitment strategy to area high schools. High school student recommendations within this area include "informing high school students of possible academic scholarships" and "setting up meetings with financial aid advisors so high school students would become better informed of aid available." Additional comments were to "offer hands-on opportunities for students to complete their FAFSA financial aid form online" and to "mail financial aid information to students."

Additional analysis of the student opinion and satisfaction survey results and interviews with staff members highlight several recommendations for improvement, which serve as appropriate summary statements. These comments range from "making additional courses available on-site at the high school" to "letting freshman and sophomore students know of the programs early enough in their high school career so they can plan to participate." As far as a review of comments about the marketing of the program, are concerned, Laura Wheaton, Jackson Township High School Guidance Director summarized the guidance viewpoint when she commented that "there are some great opportunities available to our students through these programs. I want to do what I can to make sure they have access to all that they can."

Limitations of the study

It is understood by the researcher that the twenty-six high school student respondents comprise a convenience sample of the total high school student population enrolled at Ocean County College in the spring 2002 semester. Of significance within this convenience sampling is the fact that eleven of these high school students have enrolled in a Western Civilization II course at the Southern Education Center, in Manahawkin, NJ. As mentioned earlier in this report, the students participating in this course are all advanced placement students at Southern Regional High School and their responses may have impacted the mean score for quality teaching. In addition, it was recently learned that four non-high school students who were also enrolled in the Western Civilization II course at the SEC withdrew over the course of the semester. The fact that these college students withdrew from a course that was comprised mainly of high school students may have impacted the perception that these high school students have of being accepted within the college. As a result of the above factors, caution must be exercised in generalizing these responses to represent the total high school population attending the college.

Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion

The ability to either offer OCC courses on site at the high school or allow high school juniors and seniors to enroll in courses on OCC's campus provides a solid foundation for exploration of the first research question of this study which is: 1. What are the parameters of both New Jersey's and Ocean County College's policies on dual/concurrent enrollment, which relate to the admittance of high school juniors and seniors to higher education? These parameters will be examined and discussed utilizing four themes, which McCarthy (1999) identified as a common thread among legislative actions. As a result of a review of the New

Jersey legislation (P.L. 18A:61) and OCC's general requirements admission policy #5122, the following parameters have been established for the admittance of high school juniors and seniors to college: "Student eligibility" (p.2). The state law has identified that academically eligible high school juniors and seniors may enroll in college courses while still attending high school. The establishment of a definition of academically eligible high school juniors and seniors has been delegated to administrators within the high school and college educational community.

At OCC, two different sets of eligibility criteria have been developed in order to allow for the enrollment of both part-time and full-time high school students. The first set of criteria outlines the requirements for high school seniors who want to attend full-time (12 credits or more) by participating in the Early Admissions Program at OCC. This program permits a high school senior to begin their college career in lieu of their senior year in high school. The criteria and admissions process are as follows:

1. Achieve above the 90th percentile within the high school class.
2. Submit written recommendations from the high school Director of Guidance or Principal.
3. Provide a list of pre-determined courses the student must take to meet high school graduation requirements.
4. File a formal application for admission.
5. Furnish certified transcripts covering all previous high school records.
6. Furnish a certificate of residency properly validated by the designated high school, county, or college official.
7. Comply with the requirements of policy #5156 pertaining to the College Skills Assessment Program. Students must meet the placement requirement either by taking the College Placement Test or by having a score of at least 500 in verbal and 500 in math on the SAT.
8. Successful applicants will meet with an OCC Academic Advisor to assist with registration. This individual will work with the student during his/her stay at OCC. (Ocean County College Policy #5122 and Early Admissions document)

The second set of criteria outlines the requirements for high school juniors and seniors who want to attend part-time (less than 12 credits) by participating in the Jump Start Program at OCC. This program permits a high school junior or senior to begin their college career, by attending

college on a part-time basis, enrolling in one or two courses each semester. These students would attend college courses as a supplement to their high school courses. The criteria and admissions process for Jump Start are as follows:

1. A recommendation from the high school Principal or Guidance Counselor is required.
2. Students must satisfy any course prerequisite and have performed at an overall above average level in high school or demonstrated a high potential to succeed in special areas related to college courses.
3. Jump Start students may attend part-time only.
4. Complete OCC's green high school application in consultation with your Guidance Counselor.
5. Have application signed by high school Principal or Guidance Counselor.
6. Submit application to OCC.
7. Students wishing to take mathematics or English classes must take the College Placement Test. (This requirement is waived for students with SAT scores of 500 or above verbal and 500 or above mathematics.)
8. Register at OCC's Admissions and Records Office. An Academic Advisor will be available to assist you with course selection (Ocean County College Policy #5122 and Jump Start Admissions document)

"Academic credit for college course" (p. 2). Both the State of New Jersey legislation and OCC policy permit the student to earn college credit immediately upon completion of the course or courses. These college credits can be applied to a student's high school transcript to satisfy high school graduation requirements. "Control of decision to dual enroll" (p. 3). Both the State of New Jersey legislation and OCC policy requires school district approval in order for a high school junior or senior to enroll at OCC. The process that a student would follow for obtaining this approval from the high school has previously been outlined. "College tuition payment" (p. 4). The State of New Jersey legislation on dual/concurrent enrollment permits, but does not require, school districts to pay the cost of tuition and fees for high school students who enroll within college courses. Because most districts choose not to pay, a student's family will pay the cost of their tuition and fees. OCC Policy #5300 was amended, in November of 2001 by the Board of Trustees, to include a Trustee Scholarship, which provides high school juniors and

seniors with a discounted tuition rate of $28.00 per credit plus appropriate fees for enrollment within college courses. The existing tuition rate, for students other than high school juniors and seniors, is $63.00 per credit (OCC Policy #5300 and Spring 2002 Course Brochure). Recommendations to examine the parameters of OCC's policy on dual/concurrent enrollment include:

- To monitor the academic results of high school juniors and seniors to determine if eligibility criteria may need to be amended in the future to permit outstanding high school sophomores to participate in the program. (Phase I-IV)
- To investigate parameters of student eligibility criteria within all fifteen Ocean County high school districts to ensure that "universal" access is available through the high schools for all qualified students. (Phase I-II)

Research question #2 focused on identification of marketing strategies for promoting both the Early Admission and the Jump Start programs. A multi-tiered approach has been employed by Ocean County College in communication efforts with high school administrators, guidance staff, potential students, and their parents. These initiatives include: one-on-one visitations, individualized letters/mailings, Powerpoint presentations, and Open House information sessions. As the survey results indicate, most currently enrolled students obtained information on postsecondary enrollment from their high school guidance staff. Future survey results may vary based on a wider sampling of students enrolled in the program. Recommendations to enhance the marketing of the programs include:

- To administer a follow-up student opinion survey each semester or academic year to obtain direct feedback on marketing strategies from program participants. (Phase I-IV)
- To continue to "target" parents of high school freshman and sophomore students for receipt of mailings about dual/concurrent enrollment programs at OCC. (Phase I-IV)

The third research question addressed in this study investigated the degree of student satisfaction among those high school students who were enrolled at OCC in the spring 2002 semester. These findings have been summarized within Appendix B of this report. Recommendations to enhance the degree of student satisfaction with the program include:

- To continue to distribute student opinion survey results to all Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Divisional administrative leaders. (Phase I-IV)
- To encourage all Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Divisional administrative leaders to respond to the feedback for improvement obtained from high school students. (Phase I-IV)
- To establish on-going student and academic support services information sessions to acquaint high school students with services available on campus. (Phase I-IV)

The fourth question addressed high school to college transitional and academic assistance services, which strengthen effective dual/concurrent enrollment programs. The survey results emphasized that high school students lacked information and understanding of academic advising, study skills workshops, tutoring, math/writing lab and library services. This scenario is in direct opposition to Robertson's (2001) research, which identified "the need for adequate academic support services for dual enrollees. Academic advising, pre-college counseling, financial aid planning, study skills workshops, and assessment testing can and should be woven into these vital partnerships" (p. 3) with high school staff and students. Additional transitional services have been distinguished by Watson (2000) and include the early identification and remediation of academic readiness for college. His findings indicate that college staff should begin intervention activities

> with sophomores in local high schools by giving them a placement test that profiles their academic skills and alerts them to deficiencies that may hinder their academic progress. The intent is to minimize the need for remediation once students get to college. (p. 55)

Recommendations to enhance the high school to college transitional process, thereby creating a seamless high school to college transition, include:

- To investigate with high school administrators the establishment of a process to assess academic readiness (placement testing) of high school freshmen and sophomores. This initiative is designed to provide intervention assistance for specific students in order to curtail the need for remedial education once they enroll at college. (Phase IV)

- To schedule and actively promote participation of high school juniors and seniors in a new student orientation program specifically for high school students at the college. (Phase I-IV)

- To schedule and actively promote participation of high school juniors and seniors in a one-credit college experience course specifically for high school students attending college. (Phase III)

With the above in mind, it will be necessary to review and prioritize each recommendation in order to formulate a continuous improvement strategy for assessment, analysis, implementation, and continuous improvement of dual/concurrent enrollment programs at OCC. This strategy would involve four phases and would correspond to the following timetable: Phase I: June 2002-September 2002; Phase II: September 2002-June 2003; Phase III: September 2003-June 2004; and Phase IV: September 2004-June 2005. As additional feedback, results and milestones are obtained, in the accomplishment of each phase, it will be necessary to make corrective actions to ensure that the dual/concurrent enrollment programs at OCC are not just meeting, but exceeding the needs of the students we serve.

Conclusion

As postulated within McDonough's (1997) research, "the interinstitutional linkages between most high schools and colleges, are at best, loosely coupled (Wreck 1976) and, at worst, there are no links whatsoever" (p. 10). This description is an appropriate characterization of Ocean County College's approach to communication and outreach with high schools in the past. With the appointment of a new college president and vice-president of student affairs at

OCC within the past twenty-four months, a more pro-active and high school-college partnership approach has become the norm. This strategy coincides with McDonough's research, which found that "a few schools…have tight coupling, which includes ample college preparatory and advanced placement classes, institutional networks between the high school and specific colleges, and well-developed flows of information about the college admissions process" (p. 11). It is essentially the successful transition from a loosely coupled to a tightly coupled linkage among Ocean County high schools and Ocean County College, which will determine the future success of dual/concurrent enrollment within Ocean County.

Appendix A

Early Admission and Jump Start Program Student Opinion and Satisfaction Survey

Lickert Scale Results

Ocean County College Early Admission & Jump Start Student Opinion Survey Category	Program Participants (Mean)	Program Participants (Mode)
(a) Student/Academic Support	2.77	3.00
(b) Staff Responsiveness	2.23	2.00
(c) Quality Teaching	1.88	1.00
(d) Educational Requirements	1.92	2.00
(e) College Acceptance	2.50	1.00

Appendix B

Coding Categories and Frequency of Responses for a Study of Early Admission and Jump Start Students at Ocean County College

Categories		Responses	#
1. Marketing of Programs		Direct letter to Student	
		High school Principal	
		High school Guidance Staff	22
		Recommended by high school student	2
		Ocean County College Representative	2
2. Decision to Enroll		Challenge(s)	3
		New Opportunity	2
		Get a Jump on College Credits	19
		Trustee Scholarship ($28.00 per credit)	
		Influence of Parents	
		Influence of high school Principal	
		Influence of high school Guidance Staff	
		Influence of fellow student	
		Complete College Pre-Requisites	2
3. Plans for Use of Credits		Ocean County College Program	6
		Transfer to 4-Year College	19
		Undecided	1
4. Benefits of Enrollment		Accumulation of credits before graduation	3
		Introduction to college experience	18
		Saving money	2
		Saving time	1
		Understand professor expectations	2
5. Perception of OCC		*See results section.	
6. Recommendations for Improvement			
a. Admissions:		*See results section.	
b. Student Orientation:		*See results section.	
c. Student/Academic Support		*See results section.	
d. Plans for enrolling at college		*See results section.	
e. Plans for financial aid		*See results section.	

Appendix C

Ocean County College
Early Admission and Jump Start Program
Student Opinion Survey

1.) Are you a Full-Time (12 or more credits) High School Senior who has enrolled in OCC's Early Admission Program in the Spring 2002 Semester? YES ____ NO _____

OR

2.) Are you a Part-Time (Less than 11 credits) High School Senior who has enrolled in OCC's Jump Start Program in the Spring 2002 Semester? YES ____ NO _____

3.) Was the Spring 2002 Semester your FIRST ____ or SECOND _____ Semester at OCC?

4.) How did you learn about OCC's programs for high school juniors and seniors?

_____

5.) Why did you decide to enroll in college prior to your high school graduation?

_____

6.) How are you planning to use your college credits after graduation from high school?

A. I'm planning to apply them toward an academic program at OCC _____ (Yes or No)
B. I'm planning to transfer them to another college _____(Yes or No)
If you answered yes to the above item, please name the college _____

7.) What suggestions would you provide OCC in order to improve the following aspects of the Early Admissions and Jump Start programs:

A. The Admissions Process:

_____

B. Student Orientation to the College:

_____

C. Student Services and Academic Support (academic advising, library services, study and time management skills, tutoring services, math laboratory, writing skills laboratory, student life):

_____

D. Plans for enrolling at college after high school graduation:

_____

E. Plans for applying for financial aid for college after high school graduation:

_____

8.) In your opinion, what are some of the benefits that high school juniors and seniors can obtain by attending college prior to high school graduation?

_____

_____

_____

9.) As a result of taking courses at the institution, what are your comments about OCC?

_____

_____

_____

10.) Do you have any additional suggestions or comments about the OCC Early Admission or Jump Start Program?

_____

_____

_____

Directions: For each statement listed below, indicate your degree of agreement with the statement by circling your response, i.e. **1: Strongly Agree**, **2: Agree**, **3: Neutral**, **4: Disagree,** or **5: Strongly Disagree** for each item.

a) I have an understanding of the student and academic support services available to me. (Academic Advising, Study Skills Workshops, Tutoring, Math/Writing Lab, Library)

1: Strongly Agree 2: Agree 3: Neutral 4: Disagree 5: Strongly Disagree

b) Staff members are responsive to my individual concerns.

1: Strongly Agree 2: Agree 3: Neutral 4: Disagree 5: Strongly Disagree

c) Quality teaching is important to faculty.

1: Strongly Agree 2: Agree 3: Neutral 4: Disagree 5: Strongly Disagree

d) I have an understanding of the requirements for educational programs that interest me.

1: Strongly Agree 2: Agree 3: Neutral 4: Disagree 5: Strongly Disagree

e) I feel that I have been accepted as a college student by students, faculty and staff.

1: Strongly Agree 2: Agree 3: Neutral 4: Disagree 5: Strongly Disagree

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Organization/Address: Ocean County College, College Drive, P.O. Box 2001, Toms River, NJ 08753	Telephone: 732-255-0520	FAX: 732-255-0444
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